

this is cycling UK



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The buzz about e-bikes

Alongside better infrastructure and support for active travel, e-cycles can play a key role in getting more people on bikes, as **Sarah Mitchell** explains

My summer got off to a fantastic start with a bike relay around Manchester for Bike Week. This year Bike Week celebrated its 100th anniversary (a mere toddler compared with Cycling UK at 145 years!), and we took the opportunity to get out on our bikes and talk about our Making Cycling Easier project and its success in introducing many more people to e-cycles.

Before the ride I chaired a fascinating panel of speakers, including Greater Manchester's cycling commissioner and world-class athlete Dame Sarah Storey, Mayor of Greater Manchester Andy Burnham, local cycling champion and community organiser Mohammed Ali and mountain biking legend and Bosch e-cycling influencer Tracey Moseley. Together we explored the exciting benefits of e-cycles – reaching new audiences for cycling – as well as some of the barriers and the practical solutions being explored in Manchester.

In other news, we've just announced our volunteer award winners for 2023. Take a look further in this issue to find out more about what they've achieved. We're always thankful to all of our volunteers for their time, energy and commitment.

In the broader cycling policy arena, in June we were pleased to hear that the Welsh Government announced a boost to active travel funding of more than £58m, which will help fund new and improved routes for walking and cycling. We look forward to seeing this delivered and making a fantastic difference for cycling in Wales.

Elsewhere we took a lead in tackling some disappointing news for people in Northern Ireland, as the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) proposed dramatic funding cuts to the Active School Travel Programme. We asked members to join with us to support this and were delighted to hear that our challenge has been successful: the DfI has agreed to keep enough funding to allow the programme to continue into 2024.

The National Audit Office released a report in June that concluded that the UK Government has not committed enough funding to meet its promises on active travel in England. This isn't a surprise to us, and we worked with our



James Scott, Mohammed Ali, Andy Burnham, Tracy Moseley, Dame Sarah Storey and Sarah Mitchell



partners in the Walking and Cycling Alliance (WACA) to call on the government to publish its evidence on the funding needed to deliver on its commitments. It was positive to see that the report acknowledged that the set up of Active Travel England is a step in the right direction, and we look forward to continuing to work with them to get funding and support for cycling back on track.

Over recent months, I, the trustees and the entire staff team have been developing options for Cycling UK's new strategy. Reading the feedback from all our stakeholders, it's clear that cycling stands at a significant moment. There are so many opportunities but alongside these sit a number of risks – for us as an organisation in a changing world, and for the wider development of cycling. After the trustees discuss strategy options in the summer, we'll set up some further opportunities to discuss our direction of travel with member focus groups and external stakeholders. It's an exciting time and I look forward to sharing more with all our members and supporters in the autumn. ●

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Photo: Joe Cotterill